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III. Institutional Research at the Universities of Colorado, Wisconsin, and Minnesota

University of Colorado . . . . . James I. Doi

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The Office of Institutional Research at the University of Colorado has its origin in a faculty committee report on administrative reorganization, prepared in 1956. This committee recommended that there be appointed a Director of Institutional Research, whose responsibilities would be to assist the President in the following ways:

"1. Conduct research related to legislative appropriations.

2. Conduct research related to any phase of University education, administration and operation.

   a. In exercising this function, the director shall secure qualified personnel either from the University staff or outside sources and coordinate their efforts in special areas of research.

   b. He shall make continuing research studies relative to effective control and general University improvement.

3. Any other type of research required to meet the needs of the University."

Shortly after publication of the committee report, the Regents of the University of Colorado engaged the services of a management agency to study the institution's administrative structure and to suggest how it might be reorganized. The management agency also recommended the establishment of an Office of Institutional Research. The statement of the management agency is cited below;

"Director of Institutional Research. In light of the rapid growth of the University, both in size and complexity, now being experienced and which will in all probability continue into the foreseeable future, there must be a continuous evaluation of existing programs, procedures and methods and a constant search for better ways of conducting University operations. Maximum utilization of faculty, physical plant, equipment and other resources in the achievement of education and research objectives cannot be realized without systematic study and appraisal. The possible savings in resources cannot be estimated, but there are sufficient examples of waste resulting from the lack of such organized research to suggest that they could be considerable. For this purpose

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there should be a highly trained person in the Office of the President giving his undivided attention to this function. Some such efforts have been and are being made by special committees and by the Assistant to the President; these persons are deserving of much credit, and they, more than any others, realize the need for more formalized and permanent arrangements for the conduct of this important work."

On the basis of the recommendations in these two reports, the University of Colorado established an Office of Institutional Research in July, 1957. Its director is a member of the staff of the President of the University.

One year later, at the request of the Director of Institutional Research, there was established an Administrative Committee on Institutional Research. This Committee functions in an advisory capacity to the Office of Institutional Research on policies and programs. It also assumes an administrative role in the organization of special University self-study committees, coordinates the activities of these committees, and controls their budgets. Its membership includes: Vice President for the University, chairman; Dean of Faculties; Director of Budget and Planning; Secretary of the University and of the Board of Regents; Dean of Students; Director of Libraries; Director of Admissions and Records; two faculty members; and Director of Institutional Research, executive secretary. Chairmen of special University self-study committees also sit as members of the Administrative Committee on Institutional Research during their tenure.

A general policy of the Office of Institutional Research is to encourage each University unit directly responsible for a given area to assume responsibility for studies of its problems and needs. This policy, it is believed, insures maximum use of research results and at the same time stimulates the professional growth of staff members who make the studies.

The Office of Institutional Research generally undertakes a study only if the unit directly concerned does not have the necessary staff to do so, if the study, by its very nature, can best be done by individuals not directly concerned with operational problems, or if it pertains to a University-wide problem that is not the specific concern of any one office. Questions involving assignment of responsibility for the needed research are resolved by the Administrative Committee on Institutional Research.

In actual practice, the Office of Institutional Research gives technical advice to practically all University units undertaking studies of their problems and needs; the degree of participation varies from study to study. In some cases, the Office of Institutional Research determines the research design; in others it may confine its participation to review of plans or preliminary drafts of final reports. In the case of self-study committees--i.e., the study of College of Engineering, the study of Physical Education and inter-collegiate athletics or the

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study of the University Extension--the Director of Institutional Research participates as an *ex officio* member.

The Office of Institutional Research for the University of Colorado also functions as the research agency for the Colorado Association of State-Supported Institutions of Higher Education, a voluntary group of seven colleges and universities. The Director of Institutional Research holds the title of Director of Studies for the Colorado Association. In this latter capacity he reports directly to the Association. Approximately 60 per cent of the operating budget for the Office of Institutional Research is prorated to the Colorado Association.

It is hoped, however, that this arrangement will be temporary and, as soon as circumstances permit, that the functions of the Office of Institutional Research for the University of Colorado can be separated from those for the Colorado Association of State-Supported Institutions of Higher Education.

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III. Institutional Research at the Universities of Colorado, Wisconsin, and Minnesota

University of Wisconsin . . . . J. Kenneth Little

A. History

An Office of Institutional Studies was established at the University of Wisconsin in September, 1957. Its creation followed the establishment of the Coordinating Committee for Higher Education, an agency created by the Wisonsin legislature for state-wide planning and fiscal control of the over-all programs of education and building facilities of the state-supported colleges and universities. The legislation creating the Coordinating Committees provided that administrative and technical staff would be assigned from the staff of the state colleges or the university.

Studies initiated by the Coordinating Committee sought much information about each institution. Some of these studies were of a one-shot nature; more of them were designed to provide data annually, or biennially. Such information had previously been gathered from miscellaneous university sources--the registrar, the admissions office, the secretary of the faculty, the controller, the news information service, and the alumni office. Special studies were undertaken and reported only as the various offices conceived them, or as requested by the university administration.

The need to assign research personnel to represent the University on the staff of the Coordinating Committee provided a natural circumstance for the creation of an Office of Institutional Studies, the director of which might serve both functions: (1) assisting in state-wide studies; and (2) developing the institutional information and studies required by university participation in the activities of the Coordinating Committee.

Interest in institutional studies had been growing within the university administration, and discussions of the need for such activity had been sensed before the establishment of the Coordinating Committee. In fact, a comprehensive self-study of the functions and policies of the university in which many of the faculty and administrative staff participated had recommended the creation of an office of institutional studies as a part of the president's administrative offices. The legislation creating the Coordinating Committee was responsible for fostering the establishment of this university function, but it is probable that the university's

own needs would have soon led to its establishment without this impetus.

B. Organization

At the time of its creation and at present, the functions of the office were and are open-ended. The Office is responsible to the President, and gathers such information and conducts such studies as will assist the University Administration and/or faculty in its policy formulation and decisions, and performs any other related assignments which the President may direct. In its brief history, the major activity of the Office has been participation in state-wide studies of the Coordinating Committee.

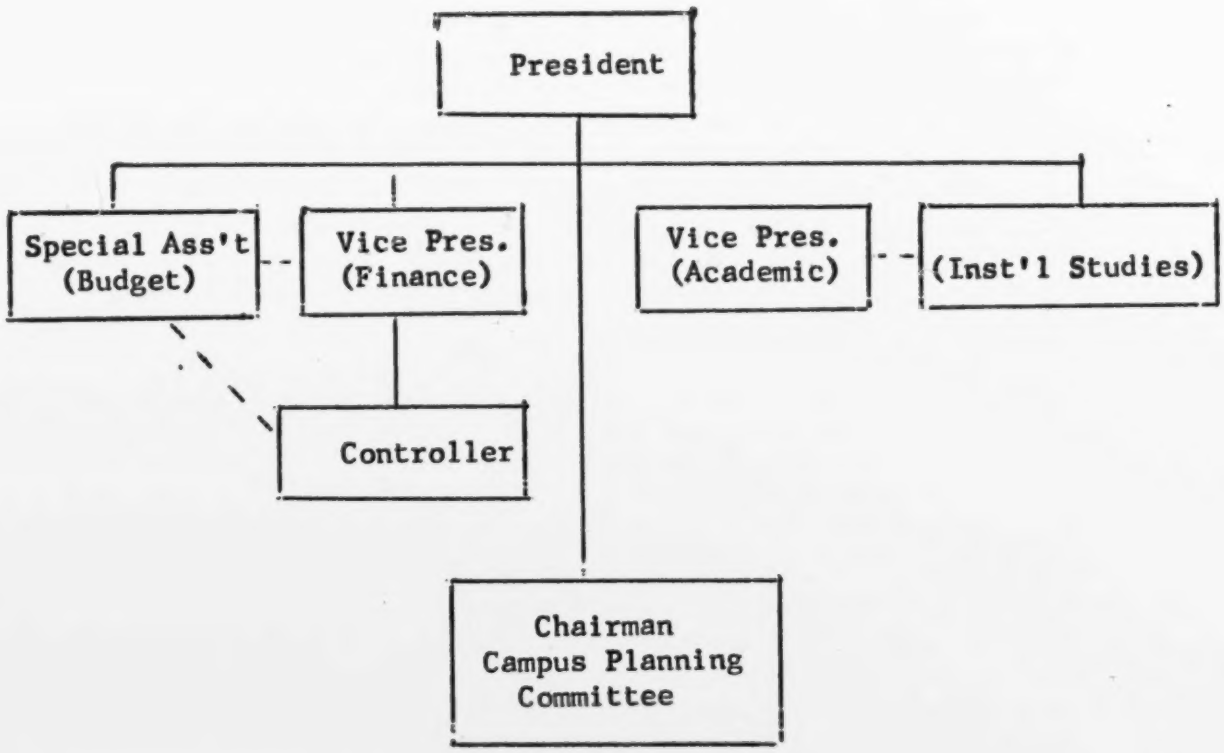
A special assistant to the President has for several years been assisting with the development of the University budget requests. This officer calls upon other university offices for supporting information, but operates independently from the office of institutional research. Information about faculty salaries, student-instructor ratio, and financial data are developed by this officer and the Controller.

Similarly, institutional problems relating to campus planning and building requests are assigned to a small staff directed by the Dean of the College of Engineering, who also serves as Chairman of the University Campus Planning Committee. Studies of space utilization and needs are performed by this group.

To date, the Office of Institutional Studies has concerned itself primarily with studies of students, faculty, and instructional matters, and works most closely with the Vice-President of Academic Affairs.

A new university administration is considering its total administrative structure, and the present organization of institutional research functions should be considered as transitional. There is a present commitment, however, that the function represented by the institutional research office is a necessary one, and therefore will likely be a permanent new member of the administrative family.

The following diagram indicates the organization of institutional research within the University administrative structure.



C. The Staff

Until July 1, 1959 the Office of Institutional Studies was composed of a director and his secretary, with provision for part-time clerical or statistical assistance. Now, a full-time professional staff member and supporting clerical assistance are being added. They will be responsible for assembling and collecting institutional information, developing standard or periodic reports of statistical data, completing administrative reports, and assisting with special studies requested by the university administration or faculty committees. Their primary function will be to collect and have readily available in usable form complete, authentic, and reliable statistical information about university operations. This function is conceived of as providing a centralized reservoir of commonly needed information, particularly data of a recurring nature.

D. Types of Studies

Administrative and faculty members find the Office a convenient source of information and use it regularly. The studies that have been conducted have varied in depth and scope. The following studies illustrate the major types of activity to date:

1. A study of the activities of university graduates. How many continue education beyond the bachelor's degree? at Wisconsin? elsewhere? Where do they get jobs? in Wisconsin? elsewhere? Starting salaries.

2. A study of the persistence of academically talented students in the University--areas of heaviest attrition and persistence.

3. A study of non-university sources of scholarships held by university students, importance of scholarships to university attendance, extent of borrowing and other self-help.

4. The educational background and teaching experience of graduate students who are teaching assistants, by field and comparison with research assistants.

5. The quality of entering students as measured by high school achievement and scholastic aptitude test score, a comparison with students 25 years ago.

6. The transfer students--collegiate origins, home origins, quality measures.

7. Analysis of classes--number, size, type of instruction, and rank of instructor.

8. Characteristics of students who were dropped for scholastic deficiency.

9. The Faculty--origin and degrees.

10. A comparison of those in the 1957 graduating class who were members of the 1953 entering class with those who discontinued before graduation.

11. A follow-up study of highly able students who discontinued study at the University, reasons for discontinuance, patterns of difficulty in university study.

12. Patterns of student difficulties with university studies, relationship to marking practices.

13. Variations in marking practices between and within departments.

14. Analyses of enrollment and enrollment trends.

III. Institutional Research at the Universities of Colorado, Wisconsin, and Minnesota

University of Minnesota . . . . John E. Stecklein

History

The admonition, "you don't know what you're starting," would have been uncommonly apt for Mr. Louis B. Wilson, Director of the Mayo Foundation when, in 1922, he suggested to Lotus B. Coffman, then president of the University of Minnesota, that the University hold a conference to discuss the improved selection of students who desired to enter medicine and other professions. For it was from this oblique beginning that the 37-year-old program of self-study and the Bureau of Institutional Research at the University of Minnesota stemmed. As a result of the letter from Mr. Wilson, President Coffman appointed a special Committee on Educational Guidance to consider the proposal. It did not take the committee long to discover, however, that it knew very little about students, either before, during, or as a result of, their university training, and even less about testing or educational and vocational guidance.

After nearly a year of study the committee recommended that the president of the University appoint an educational research committee to promote the study and investigation of educational problems within the University. The immediate purpose of the research committee was to be the coordination of research being done by individuals in the University, advising in regard to the direction which research should take and the methods to be employed, and promoting the dissemination of resulting information throughout the University.

As a result of this recommendation, President Coffman appointed a 14-member committee in 1924, which consisted of most of the college deans and certain key members of the teaching staff. Melvin E. Haggerty, Dean of the College of Education, was named as the first chairman of the newly formed University Committee on Educational Research. Dean Haggerty remained as chairman of this committee until his death in 1937 and most of the original members also served during this entire period. After Dean Haggerty's death, T. R. McConnell served as chairman of the Committee for about ten years. In 1948, the name of the unit was changed from the Committee on Educational Research to the Bureau of Institutional Research. Ruth E. Eckert, who had been directing the work of the central office since 1940, was named coordinator of the Bureau of Institutional and Educational Research (the latter a research unit of the College of Education), and an associate director was named

for each bureau. Robert J. Keller, who was named associate director of the Bureau under Dr. Eckert, became the director of the Bureau of Institutional Research in 1950. Since that time the Bureau has been headed by its own full-time director, although office facilities, equipment, clerical staff, and some other personnel have continued to be shared with the Bureau of Educational Research.

When the Bureau was set up in 1948, the faculty committee became an advisory committee to the director and a standing committee of the University Senate. In contrast to the earlier years, recent members of this advisory committee have tended to be teaching faculty rather than deans, with nearly all of the areas of the University on all three campuses represented by its 14 members.

From its inception, the earlier Committee on Educational Research considered itself to be a faculty research unit rather than a group set up to do special research for the administration. As a result, research studies of immediate interest to members of the University's administration, sometimes referred to as administrative research studies, were conscientiously avoided and left to other units. However, the pressures of World War II were responsible for two large scale studies carried out by presidential request in the early 1940's--a curriculum survey and a faculty load study.

Increased demand for the Bureau's services led to the formation of an Administrative Research Unit within the Bureau in 1956. Additional staff and budget were made available to support these new research activities; they were provided, however, in keeping with the belief that faculty control of the research activities of the Bureau should continue, and that administrative research activities should not dominate the attention of the Bureau staff.

Organization

The role of the Bureau of Institutional Research at the University of Minnesota is stated in the Faculty Handbook distributed to all new staff members as follows: "The Bureau of Institutional Research is a special research unit maintained by the University for the study of its own educational and administrative problems. It is a fact-finding organization with no responsibility for modifying university instruction or administration. It seeks only to discover through scientific inquiries the answers to problems that arise in the educational work of a great university.....

"...The Bureau offers consultative aid to individuals and staff groups pursuing the study of special problems, provides the proper facilities for many kinds of educational investigation, and conducts experimental research on approved projects.

"(It) is a research-service unit maintained especially for the faculty of the University of Minnesota. Faculty members are cordially

invited to use it."

The Bureau is an independent, all-University unit directly responsible to the academic vice-president. It consists of two units, a general educational research unit and an administrative research unit, coordinated by the Director and an office supervisor.

From a beginning where projects were conceived, developed, and conducted by a committee of faculty members working with special appropriations and with part-time clerical and student help, institutional research at the University of Minnesota has grown into a formalized Bureau with a full and part-time staff of 16 persons. The staff is comprised of five full-time professional staff members (in addition to the director), seven part-time positions for graduate student workers, an office supervisor, and two secretaries.

In the early days of the Committee on Educational Research, faculty members would propose research studies to the Committee and if the Committee found the proposal to be of substantial worth, it would recommend an appropriation to cover the necessary expenses of conducting the study and to cover, in some instances, the cost of relieving the teacher of part of his teaching load in order to conduct the research. In those days, special appropriations had to be obtained from the president's office to cover such expenses, but after 1938 when the committee received its first listing in the University printed budget, project allocations were made without special request. As the size of the University has increased, however, a smaller proportion of the Bureau's studies has been conducted with individual faculty members, and a larger proportion in cooperation with faculty committees or as a Bureau-initiated project. Today, research proposals may come from individual faculty members, faculty committees of the various colleges, the University Senate, standing senate committees, deans or department heads, the president or other members of his central administration, or from the Director and members of the Bureau staff.

Because the order of priority has been on the problems of the University first, on higher education in Minnesota second, and on higher education in the nation third, invitations from governmental or other outside agencies to seek contracts for special research studies, have been consistently declined, and the Bureau has actively sought such a grant only once in the past twelve years. The policy has been to avoid any outside contract commitments unless they fit especially well into the current research interests of the Bureau.

The costs of research studies are covered almost entirely from the Bureau's budget. In certain instances cross-charges are arranged to cover unusual printing or mailing costs, or other out-of-the-pocket expenses, but aside from these, all costs of services of the professional staff of the Bureau, clerical assistance, and costs of writing and producing reports are borne by the Bureau's budget.

One important function served by the Bureau which is easily overlooked is that of providing educational research experience for graduate students. It is possible for qualified individuals to begin with a half-time research assistantship and move up to a half-time or even a full-time research fellowship with the Bureau. Graduate student who fill these part-time positions are usually students majoring in educational psychology, psychology, sociology, or statistics.

Types of Studies

As might be expected from the origins of the Committee on Educational Research, research emphasis during the first 15 years of the Committee was on studies of student personnel, student selection, testing, admissions, and retention. This is not to say that some studies of class size and faculty characteristics, among others, were not also conducted, but the primary focus was upon the students. During the 1940's, studies of students and testing practices continued, but increased attention was given to problems of curriculum and instruction. With the increasing development of the Student Counseling Bureau at Minnesota, which has assumed continuous responsibility for research on students, the Bureau's research emphasis on curriculum and instruction and on studies of faculty and staffing has increased.

As the Bureau is now constituted, its scope of institutional research is essentially unlimited. However, because certain kinds of institutional research have traditionally been conducted by other university departments, the Administrative Research Unit has purposely avoided any encroachment upon activities which other units might consider to be their special domain. The Bureau frequently cooperates with these other units, however, in making analyses of costs, budget allocation, faculty load, enrollments, or student characteristics. As a result, institutional research at Minnesota is not completely centralized in one unit.

The Bureau also provides leadership in certain studies involving all institutions of higher education in the state of Minnesota and in research in higher education for the state legislature. One example of the first service is the annual enrollment forecast and attendance report made by the Bureau. Another example is the proposed state-wide cost and statistical study designed by the Bureau, to be conducted in cooperation with the Association of Minnesota Colleges. The volume Higher Education in Minnesota reports a series of research studies conducted by the Bureau for a legislative Commission on Higher Education, and represents service to the state which is typical.

Projects currently underway or in the design stage include the following: (1) an evaluation of the School of Architecture program by all registered architects in Minnesota; (2) evaluation of the effects of the use of dental assistants upon the attitudes and productivity of dental students; (3) a study of faculty attraction and retention; (4) a class size experiment in accounting; (5) honor students' perceptions

of college teaching as a career; (6) differential attitudes and interests of college and university faculty members; (7) comparative analyses of faculty activities; (8) a developmental analysis of budget allocations during the past 20-25 years; and (9) a pilot study to determine how college teachers set their levels of expectation concerning the work and achievement of their students, and how these levels differ. Attempts are continually being made to broaden the scope of activity, both in types of study and in the areas of the University involved.

Conclusion

The involvement of the faculty in the development of the institutional research program at Minnesota has resulted in an atmosphere of understanding cooperation with the Bureau's research requests--both general and administrative--which is not easy to come by. Too often, in my estimation, if any institutional research is done, it is done by and for a member of the administration, and the faculty resents such research, not because they think it is unnecessary, but because they do not feel that they are a part of such research, except as it is imposed upon them. In my estimation, a sound institutional research program best serves an institution if at least as much service is provided to the faculty as is provided to the administration, and if faculty participation is ensured in the research program. In this way the administration's benefits are both direct and indirect.